U.S. Army Corps
of Engineers
St. Paul District

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Public Affairs

Corps Facts
St. Paul District

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The St. Paul District is where the "Mighty Mississippi River" starts its long journey through the middle of the United States of America to the Gulf of Mexico. The district covers an area of approximately 139,000 square miles. The district borders follow the edges of four river basins – Mississippi River, Red River of the North, Souris River and Rainy River. The latter three basins drain north into Hudson's Bay. The district shares about 500 miles of border with three Canadian provinces. This area includes most of Minnesota, the western half of Wisconsin, the northeastern half of North Dakota and small portions of South Dakota and northern Iowa.

Mission

The St. Paul District is responsible for supporting inland navigation by operating 13 locks and dams and by maintaining the nine-foot navigation channel on the upper Mississippi River. It helps communities reduce damages caused by flooding and operates 16 reservoirs for flood damage reduction, recreation, fish and wildlife habitat and water supply, as well as provides emergency response operations following natural disasters. It issues permits for work in wetlands and navigable rivers and is responsible for an environmental restoration program to improve fish and wildlife habitat. In addition, the district maintains 94 recreation areas open to the public.

History

The St. Paul District began its service to the region on July 31, 1866. Civil war hero Maj. Gouverneur Kemble Warren opened the first engineer office with three missions: to examine the Mississippi River and its principal tributaries, to determine the best means of bridging the Mississippi between St. Louis and St. Paul and to devise the best means of establishing a four-foot channel from St. Louis to the Falls of St. Anthony. In 1883, the St. Paul District planned and developed the road network in the first national park, Yellowstone. In 1884, it completed America's first major reservoir system in Leech, Winnibigoshish and Pokegama, Minn. In 1910, it finished America's first dam with a hydroelectric plan, Lock and Dam 1 in Minneapolis. And in 1970, the St. Paul District designed the first nonstructural flood control project in Prairie du Chien, Wis. Since then, the district has received four Chief of Engineers Award of Excellence – one in 1983 for the rehabilitation of Lock and Dam One; one in 1989 for the building of Weaver Bottoms Island in Lower Pool 8; one in 1996 for a flood control project in Rochester, Minn.; and one in 1998 for a flood control project in Saint Paul, Minn.

Organization

The St. Paul District office headquarters is located in downtown St. Paul, Minn. It employs more than 750 people located in more than 40 field sites in five sites, with 350 of the employees in the district headquarters. The St. Paul District is one of six Corps districts that make up the Mississippi Valley Division, located in Vicksburg, Miss. It is one of eight divisions that make up the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Contributions

In fiscal year 2001, the St. Paul District's budget exceeded $143 million to the local economy. Its 13 locks hosted passage to more than 143,000 vessels, including 19,000 tows, 121,000 recreational craft and 3,000 excursion and other vessels. During the record floods in the spring of 2001, the district provided more than 3.3 million sandbags, loaned more than 84 flood pumps and constructed 20 miles of emergency levees at 10 communities and three river basins. The total damages prevented by Corps emergency activities and permanent projects saved $451 million in flood damages.